THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Department of Ocean Development has intimated that in accordance with the Territorial Water, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zones and other Maritime Zones Act, 1976, and with ratification of United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea, Exclusive Economic Zone of 200 nautical miles from baselines is already into existence and therefore the question of finalising road map to set up Exclusive Economic Zone does not arise.

(b) and (c) In view of the above, do not arise.

Issue of commercial licences by IAF

2842. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the IAF has started issuing commercial licences from its training academies; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) Director General of Civil Aviation has approved Air Force Academy, Helicopter Training School and Air Force Station, Yelahanka as centres for conducting flying training for Commercial Pilot Licence and Flight Navigator Licence examinations. Licences will be issued to successful candidates by Director General of Civil Aviation.

Defence co-operation with France

2843. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the first week of November, 2002, a high-level defence delegation left for France to attend the annual meeting of the Committee for Defence Co-operation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of co-operation that India seeks from France?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) During November 2002 the 5th meeting of Indo-French High Committee on Defence Cooperation was held in Paris. The Indian delegation was led by the Defence Secretary. The two sides discussed matters regarding bilateral defence co-operation.

It would not be in the interest of national security to give details of Defence co-operation that India seeks from France.

Production of Light Combat Aircraft and its components

2844. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether successful testing of prototypes of Indigenously built Light Combat Aircraft reached production stage;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Praga Tools Ltd. at Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh is having technicians and suitable technical equipment to manufacture any component/parts pertaining to Light Combat Aircraft;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if so, the reasons for the Defence Ministry in not making use of Praga Tools Ltd. for the production of component/parts of Light Combat Aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme is in advanced stage of development and fligt testing on two technology demonstrators. Sanction has been accorded for building 5 prototypes of LCA for accelerating flight testing to reach the production stage.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. M/s. Praga Tools Ltd. have technical infrastructure to undertake aircraft-related machining work. They have been entrusted with machining work related to aircraft structural parts, tooling and line replaceable units of LCA during full-scale engineering development phase.

(f) M/s. Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) is the designated agency for LCA production. Production requirement would be sub-contracted by HAL to the identified vendors.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.